



*Welcoming*  
EPIPHANY

## Matt. 2

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

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<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

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<sup>5</sup>“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.””

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<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

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<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

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<sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

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<sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



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<sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.



# Unpacking the Text

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# During the time of Herod...

- According to NT scholar D. A. Carson, Herod the Great was ...
- Wealthy
- Politically shrewd
- Intensely loyal
- Excellent administrator

# During the time of Herod...

- Clever enough to remain in the good graces of successive Roman emperors.
- His famine relief was superb (24-23 B.C.)
- His building projects were admired even by his foes (including the Jewish Temple, which began construction in 20 B.C.) .

# During the time of Herod...

- Loved power
- At times, inflicted incredibly heavy taxes on the people
- Confiscated wealth from political opponents
- Resented the fact that many Jews saw him as a usurper.

# During the time of Herod...

- Rises to power in 37 B.C.
- Dismisses first wife, Doris, and firstborn son, Antipater, in order to marry Mariamne, whom he loved.
- He had her grandfather and 17 year old brother killed.

# During the time of Herod...

- By 29 B.C. Mariamne is accused of adultery and executed.
- A year later, Mariamne's mother is executed.
- One historian has noted that Herod's brother "escaped death only by dying."

# During the time of Herod...

- Doris' side of family want back in power, so they convince Herod that his two sons to Mariamne are plotting against him.
- 7 B.C. they are convicted and executed.



# During the time of Herod...

- Antipater (Herod's firstborn son, whom he banished) can't wait for his turn to be king, so he plots to poison dad.
- Herod finds out and executes his most natural heir 5 days prior to his own death.
- His own funeral arrangements

# During the time of Herod...

- In view of such executions, the emperor Augustus reportedly made a joke that “It is better to be Herod’s pig than son” (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 2:4:11)
- Two levels
  - Greek for pig is *hus*, Greek for son is *huios*

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  - Greek for pig is *hus*, Greek for son is *huios*
  - Since Herod was a Jew, he didn’t eat pork and his pig would be safe.

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# Unwrapping the Gifts



# Follow the example of the Magi

- How far are you willing to go to bring God glory?



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